

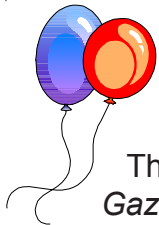
GOLDEN GAZETTE

A Monthly Newspaper for Senior Adults in the Fairfax Area

MAY 2006

Serving Seniors for 30 Years

VOL. 30, NO. 1



Golden Gazette Celebrates 30th Anniversary

This month, the *Golden Gazette* celebrates its 30th anniversary. It is mailed to about 25,000 readers. In addition, 650 readers receive the large-print version. (In 1996, a large-print copy was produced for one reader.) The recorded version is sent to 17 readers.

Originally published by the Fairfax Office of Extension and Continuing Education, it began as a 4-page newsletter. In 1981 it was published by the Department of Human Services.

In 1985 it transferred to the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging and became an 8-page tabloid. The layout was done in-house by the editor who typed the text on an electric typewriter then pasted the copy on the layout sheets using hot wax. The camera-ready copy was sent to an outside vendor for printing.

In 1992, we switched to computers; the format changed to the current size; and the *Golden Gazette* began to accept paid advertising. Since then, the number of pages has increased from 16 to 24. In 2004, the online version was inaugurated (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa/goldengazette.htm).

Artie's Restaurant Supports Meals on Wheels



Fairfax Area Agency on Aging staff recently enjoyed lunch and dessert at Artie's in Fairfax.

Great American Restaurants helps support various community organizations through dessert sales in their restaurants. Artie's restaurant has designated the Meals on Wheels (MOW) program as the recipient of a portion of its dessert sales. Since July 2002, substantial checks from Artie's have helped many seriously ill and disabled adults benefit from the nutritious meals provided by MOW.

The MOW program is extremely appreciative of this unexpected source of financial support from the community at a time when the need for this vital service has grown dramatically.

You can support this effort by stopping by Artie's, at 3260 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax, to enjoy a great meal. Be sure to treat yourself to dessert!

This is an abridged version with links to senior centers and county tours. Policy prohibits publishing the ads that are included in the print version.

If you would like to receive the print version on a monthly basis, please e-mail kathy.wilson@fairfaxcounty.gov. It's free! Large-print and recorded formats also are available.



GOLDEN GAZETTE

Published by the

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA

Department of Family Services

FAIRFAX AREA AGENCY ON AGING

12011 Government Center Parkway

Suite #708

Fairfax, VA 22035-1104

Telephone: 703-324-5411

Toll-Free: 1-866-503-0217

TTY: 703-449-1186

FAX: 703-449-8689

Web Site: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa. The Golden Gazette is online.

The *Golden Gazette* is a free, monthly newspaper dedicated to serving persons age 60 and over in Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.

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Publication of advertising contained herein does not constitute endorsement.



To comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act, the *Golden Gazette* is available in large-print and recorded formats. Call **703-324-5633** to request an alternative format.

DEADLINES

ALWAYS the first of the month a month in advance (for ads, ad payments, and announcements).
The next deadline is June 1 for the July issue.

ADDRESS ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Although the *Golden Gazette* accepts limited paid advertisements, reader contributions are critical to ensure continuation of the publication. We are very grateful to all of you who do send contributions, regardless of the amount (the average contribution is about \$7.00). **Please note that contributions are entirely voluntary.**

If you have an address change, are receiving duplicates, or if you would like to make a contribution, please complete the form below and mail to: ***Golden Gazette, Area Agency on Aging, 12011 Government Center Parkway, Suite 708, Fairfax, VA 22035-1104.*** Checks should be made payable to **Fairfax County**. Please list your current address below or attach your mailing label and check the appropriate lines. If you prefer to call about address changes, the number is **703-324-5633**.

____ Contribution check attached.
____ I am NOT currently on your mailing list. Please add my name and address.
____ I am already on your mailing list.
____ I am moving. My new address in the Fairfax area will be:
NAME _____
CURRENT ADDRESS _____ Zip: _____
NEW ADDRESS (if applicable) _____ Zip: _____
TELEPHONE (in case we have a question) _____

The names and addresses of persons receiving the *Golden Gazette* are subject to disclosure pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, VA Code Sec. 2.1-340 thru 346.1. Inquiries or complaints concerning this policy should be directed to the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, 12011 Government Center Parkway, #708, Fairfax, VA 22035-1104.

The Fairfax Area Agency on Aging contracts with Southern Maryland Printing in Waldorf, MD, for printing and mailing services.

Commission on Aging Monthly Meeting

The Fairfax Area Commission on Aging (COA) will meet on **Wednesday, May 17, 1:00 p.m.**, at Supervisor Bulova's office, Braddock Hall (adjacent to the Kings Park Library, 9002 Burke Lake Road, Burke). A public comment period is held at the beginning of each meeting. (Note: The COA meets on the third Wednesday of each month, **except August.**)

Call **703-324-7746** for information or to be placed on the mailing list. If you need a sign language interpreter or any special accommodation or auxiliary aid, please call the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging at **703-324-5411** (voice) or **703-449-1186** (TTY) at least five working days in advance of the meeting. There is no charge for these services.

Presbycusis: Hearing Loss in Seniors

Did you know that approximately 31 million Americans struggle with hearing loss that compromises their ability to communicate without effort? Hearing loss is the third most prevalent, treatable condition among the senior population after arthritis and hypertension. It affects about 30-35% of adults between the ages of 65 and 75 and an estimated 40-50% of people over the age of 75. If you suspect you have a hearing loss, you are not alone!

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month—a good time for all of us to have our hearing evaluated. The most common type of hearing loss among seniors is called Presbycusis and is part of the normal aging process. Presbycusis is a fancy word for high frequency hearing loss, which means that consonants can sound alike, such as "p" and "b," "t" and "d." This causes words to sound alike, such as "pie" and "buy," "time" and "dime."

Years ago a client came into my office asking for a paper cup. I handed him a paper clip. When he shook his head, I just handed him a bigger clip. "**CUP!**" he said loudly and impatiently, staring at me like I was a complete twit.

Hearing loss, which often starts out gradually, leads to misunderstandings in conversations. Often, our first reaction is to assume that there is nothing wrong with our hearing, and everyone around us is mumbling or speaking too softly. We are, after all, still *hearing*, we are just not *understanding*. But understanding conversation is the key to feeling connected to those we love and, without treatment, our hearing loss can plunge us into isolation and depression because we feel left out of our circle of family and friends even when we are with them.

If you suspect you have a hearing loss, the first step is to have a physical exam to rule out any conditions such as allergies, reaction to medications, or (rarely) tumors. The next step is to have a hearing evaluation by a licensed audiologist who may recommend hearing aids,

depending on your degree of hearing loss. There also are assistive technologies available today such as personal amplifiers, amplified telephones, listening systems for the television, and alerting systems for your doorbell and telephone. Speechreading (or lipreading) classes are excellent resources for developing improved communication strategies.

You may learn about hearing aids, assistive technologies, and other topics relating to hearing loss at **Celebrate Communication 2006**, Northern Virginia Resource Center's free community outreach event (*see announcement below*). For more information, call NVRC at **703-352-9055** or visit www.nvrc.org.

Source: Bonnie O'Leary is an outreach specialist for the Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons (NVRC). She is a late-deafened adult. She may be reached at boleary@nvrc.org.

Celebrate Communication 2006

If you or someone you love has a hearing loss, come to **Celebrate Communication 2006** on Saturday, May 13, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., at the George Mason University's Center for the Arts. This free event will feature more than 50 exhibitors providing information on hearing aids, assistive technologies, Sign language, local support groups and Hearing dogs. It also will feature demonstrations, presentations, and children's activities.

For updates or more information, visit the Northern Virginia Resource Center Web site at www.nvrc.org, or call **703-352-9055** (voice), 703-352-9056 (TTY).

JOANNE STUDER—VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

by Leslie Trettau, Volunteer Reporter

Joanne Studer of Vienna remembers how Meals on Wheels (MOW) was a blessing to her parents. So when it was suggested that she volunteer for the program in 1981, she jumped right in, enlisting another neighbor, Helen Kern, to help her. Helen and Joanne had been friends since they both moved into the same neighborhood in 1965. They had done many things together, including traveling, and both thought it would be a good idea to participate in this Fairfax Area Agency on Aging program. Helen dedicated 25 years to MOW, but recently moved, and Joanne has partnered with another lady to continue her service.

Joanne says that it gives her a good feeling to help others. She enjoys visiting with the people in the program and looks forward to seeing them. She feels as if they are her friends and it makes her happy to help someone in need. Once a month, she picks up the meals from Fairfax High School and delivers them to people in the area.

Besides volunteering for the county, Joanne also is a professional clown and volunteers her time at local hospitals. She was a mother and homemaker, but when her two sons left the nest, she looked for another way to fill her time. She signed up for an 8-week clowning class. It didn't take her long to realize that she has a passion for clowning and loved making people laugh. She participates in parades, and frequents the children's wards and emergency rooms at local hospitals. One of her alter egos is Doctor or Nurse Tudor who tells the patients that she is there to do a pre-exam to assist the regular doctor. Joanne says that she loves the look on their faces when they see her.

She enjoys bowling and is an active member of the Totally Eccentric Adventurous Red Hatters of Vienna. She has two sons who live in Virginia and three grandchildren.

Joanne Studer, Helen Kern, and people like them, are the reason that the Meals on Wheels program continues to be such a success.



Joanne Studer, Meals on Wheels Volunteer *(Photo by Leslie Trettau)*

2-Day AARP Safe Driver Program

Sponsored by the
Oakton-Vienna Shepherd's Center

Date: May 8 and 10

Time: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. each day.

Must attend both classes to receive certificate.

Place: Oakton United Methodist Church
2951 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna

Cost: \$10

RSVP: Call **703-281-0538**

This class is designed to help people maintain their independence and driving privileges. Most insurance companies offer a discount to drivers who complete the course (check with your insurer).

Medicare Part D Premium Penalty Arrives!

The Medicare Part D drug program went into effect on January 1, 2006. This program is available to all Medicare beneficiaries, regardless of income or assets. It is intended to provide prescription coverage to any Medicare beneficiaries who may need it. The Initial Enrollment Period for this program began November 15, 2005, and ends May 15, 2006. There are 42 plans from which to choose in our geographic area.

For current Medicare beneficiaries who do not have full-coverage Medicaid, known as dual eligibles, the **deadline** for enrolling in a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan (PDP) is **May 15, 2006**. After May 15, they must wait until the next open enrollment period to enroll in a PDP. They also will be subject to the premium penalty of 1% for each month they could have enrolled in a Part D plan but did not. For example, if a person is eligible to join a Part D plan now and does not, he/she must wait until the next open enrollment period of November 15, 2006, through December 31, 2006, to enroll in a plan. The effective date of their choice of plan will be January 1, 2007, **but with a 7% penalty added to the cost of their premium. This 7% penalty will remain in effect for the rest of his/her life!**

Beneficiaries who have current coverage that is "creditable," meaning coverage that is as good as or better than Medicare Part D, can delay their enrollment without fearing that a premium penalty will be assessed to them. If these individuals somehow lose their creditable coverage, they have a Special Enrollment Period of 63 days from the loss of coverage to enroll in a Part D plan without a penalty accruing.

It has been suggested that even if you don't take a lot of prescription drugs now, or if

you are having difficulty choosing a plan, you still should consider joining a drug plan by May 15. As most people get older they will likely need prescription medications to stay healthy. It might be wise to join the least expensive PDP in the area to avoid the premium penalty. Remember, you can always switch plans during the next open enrollment period should your medications needs increase or change.

If you need help making these decisions, you may call Medicare at **1-800-633-4227** or Fairfax area Volunteer Insurance Counseling Assistance Program (VICAP), at **703-324-5851**.

Editor's Note: When this issue of the Golden Gazette went to press on April 14, there were several bills being considered by Congress regarding delaying the premium penalty for the remainder of the year. If the penalty date is postponed, there will be an announcement in the June Golden Gazette.

Herndon/Reston Senior Senior Prom

The Rotary Clubs of Herndon and Reston will hold their annual Senior Senior Prom on Saturday, May 6, from 2:00 to 4:30 pm at the Herndon Senior Center, 873 Grace Street, Herndon (adjacent to Herndon Harbor House). This annual event features the Loudoun Jazz Ensemble and the 8-Week Wonders Swing Dancers. All Herndon/Reston residents age 50 years or better are invited to attend. Prom attire requested. Doors open at 2:00 pm. Admission is free. For reservations, call *The Observer* newspapers at **703-437-5886**. Ask for Will Grein or Chris Moore. Transportation will be provided for those who request it. All proceeds will benefit the Herndon and Reston Rotary Clubs' scholarship funds and community service activities. This event has sold out in the past, and seating is limited, so advance reservations are recommended.

Gentlemen volunteer dancers are needed. Contact Yvonne Hoffman at **703-736-9586** or atrotaryclubofherndon@yahoo.com.

HEALTH INSURANCE QUESTIONS?
Call the Virginia Insurance Counseling &
Assistance Program (VICAP) at
703-324-5851.

Safety Precautions With Gasoline-Powered Equipment

It's time to start the engines on boats, motor-bikes, lawn mowers, leaf blowers and many other types of gasoline-powered equipment. It's also time to keep in mind that handling the gasoline that powers equipment requires special care. Every summer hundreds of Americans forget how dangerous gasoline is and suffer painful, disfiguring injuries, or are even killed, while using gasoline-powered equipment.

Gasoline is a flammable liquid that produces invisible vapors that are heavier than air. These vapors tend to float along the ground, often far from the container where they originated. As soon as they find a heat source, such as a burning cigarette, the pilot light in an appliance, the hot motor on equipment, or a flame produced by the flick of a lighter, the vapors explode. Since you can't see the vapors, you won't know where they are spreading until it's too late.

Make sure that anyone using gasoline-powered equipment knows and follows these safety precautions:

- ◆ Never smoke while using or refueling gasoline-powered engines.
- ◆ Always allow the engine to cool before refueling. Shut down the engine, all pumps, fans, and heating devices.
- ◆ Refuel outside in a well-ventilated area, away from any heat source.
- ◆ After refueling, move the equipment at least 10 feet from where you filled it before restarting the engine.
- ◆ Take a boat's portable fuel tanks to shore to refuel. Wipe off any spillage before taking them back onboard.
- ◆ If fueling permanent tanks on a boat, run the bilge fans for a few minutes to clear fumes from the area before starting the engine.
- ◆ Never use gasoline as a cleaner or solvent.
- ◆ Gasoline should never be used to start or accelerate a cooking fire or campfire. Many people are injured when the container literally explodes in their hands as they try to pour gasoline on a slow-burning fire or over hot coals.

- ◆ In the event of a fire, remove clothes immediately and wash thoroughly. If even a small amount of gasoline is spilled on you, get everyone away immediately; water often will spread a flammable liquid fire.

- ◆ If a person's clothes catch on fire, they should stop, drop, and roll.

- ◆ If the skin is burned, apply cool water immediately and seek medical attention.

For more fire prevention information, call **703-246-3801**, TTY 703-385-4419.

Source: Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department.

Fairfax County Releases Demographic Study

Fairfax County recently released a comprehensive demographic study, "Anticipating the Future: A Discussion of Trends in Fairfax County," which highlights the past, present and future of the county. This study was requested by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in May 2004 to review current and forecasted changes in the county's demographics and the impact of those changes on county services.

In November 2004, a working paper was released summarizing future trends with a focus on the growth in the county's senior population. This study updates and expands on that initial work.

It is the first study done in Fairfax County that brings together data from more than 75 major sources to demonstrate trends with implications and inferences covering human and social needs, housing, public safety, patterns of income and wealth, health care, technology change and community engagement.

The full report may be accessed online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aboutfairfax. Printed copies may be purchased for \$4 from the Maps and Publications Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 156, Fairfax, VA 22035. **703-324-2974**, TTY 711.

SENIOR CENTER HIGHLIGHTS



These programs are administered by the Department of Community & Recreation Services, with the exceptions of the City of Fairfax and the City of Falls Church senior centers and the Gum Springs Community Center. If participation accommodations are needed in accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, please call 703-324-5544 or TTY 703-222-9693 at least 10 working days in advance of the event. **All events are free unless otherwise noted.** *The symbol RR means reservations are required.* These are just a few of the activities offered. Call the center nearest you for a complete listing or if you have questions. Senior centers will be closed on May 29 for Memorial Day.

<u>Bailey's</u> <u>Bailey's Community Center</u> 5920 Summers Lane Bailey's Crossroads, VA 22041 Phone: 703-820-2131	Wednesdays	10:00 a.m., Chair Exercise With Mindy.
	Wednesdays	12:45 p.m., Line Dancing With TJ. \$5/8-Week Session.
	Mon. 5/1	12:45 p.m., <i>Managing Insomnia</i> .
	Fri. 5/12	11:00 a.m., Mother's Day Celebration & Luncheon.
	Wed. 5/17	12:30 p.m., <i>Fire Safety and Prevention</i> With Charles Gilbert, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue.
	Fri. 5/26	12:30 p.m., May Birthday Celebration.
<u>City of Fairfax</u> 4401 Sideburn Road Fairfax, VA 22030 Phone: 703-359-2487	Sat. 5/6	9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Bake Sale at Burke Wal-Mart. Need Bakers & Volunteers.
	Wed. 5/10	9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sherwood Gardens & Inner Harbor in Baltimore, MD. Lunch on Your Own. (RR).
	Thur. 5/11	9:00 a.m., Breakfast Club at American Legion on Oak Street. Breakfast on Your Own.
	Thur. 5/18	10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Fairfax Antique Arts Association. Call 703-631-9020 for information.
	Fri. 5/19	11:00 a.m., Out-to-Lunch Bunch, Cheesecake Factory, Tysons Galleria.
<u>City of Falls Church</u> 223 Little Falls Street <i>(Next to City Hall)</i> Falls Church, VA 22046 Phone: 703-248-5020/5021 Note: Blood pressure checks are held the 2 nd and 4 th Tuesdays of the month, 10:00-11:30 a.m.	Tue. 5/2	1:30 p.m., Medicare Prescription Drug Program.
	Mon. 5/8	12:30-2:30 p.m., Lunch Bunch to Lone Star.
	Thur. 5/11	1:00 p.m., Mother's Day Celebration.
	Fri. 5/12	10:15 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Reston Town Center.
	Tue. 5/23	9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Senior Health Fair.
	Fri. 5/26	10:15 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Old Town Alexandria
	Fri. 5/26	10:30 a.m., Armchair Travel: Istanbul.
	<u>Special Senior Trips – Call for Details</u> Annual National Arboretum; Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; Overnight Trip to Atlantic City.	
<u>Franconia/Springfield</u> 6300 Beulah St. Alexandria, VA 22310 Phone: 703-924-9762	Mondays	10:30 a.m., Jazzercise With Mindy.
	Thursdays	12:30 p.m., English as a Second Language With Terri.
	Fri. 5/12	1:00 p.m., Mother's Day Tea.
	Fri. 5/19	10:00 a.m., Trip: American History Museum. (RR)
	Tue. 5/30	12:30 p.m., <i>Habits Over a Lifetime</i> With Margaret Kollay.
<u>Groveton at South County</u> 8350 Richmond Highway Ste. 325 Alexandria, VA 22309 Phone: 703-704-6216	Wednesdays	11:00 a.m., Free Computer Coaching by Appointment.
	Wednesdays	3:00 p.m., New Time! Ballet & Stretch.
	Thursdays	1:00 p.m., Conversational Spanish With Julia.
	Mon. 5/1	10:00 a.m., That Oldies Place With DJ Steve.
	Fri. 5/5	12:45 p.m., <i>Habits Over a Lifetime</i> With Margaret Kollay.
	Sat. 5/20	12:00 p.m., South County Government Center Open House.

S E N I O R C E N T E R

Gum Springs
Gum Springs Community Center
8100 Fordson Road
Alexandria, VA 22306
Phone: 703-360-6088

Mondays 10:00 a.m., Sewing and Quilting.
 Tuesdays 10:30 a.m., Ceramics.
 Wednesdays 10:30 a.m., Shopping/Bowling (Alexandria Bowling Center).
 Thursdays 1:00 p.m., Bingo.
 Fridays 10:00 a.m., Low-Impact Exercise.

Herndon Senior Center
873 Grace Street
Herndon, VA 20170
Phone: 703-464-6200

Wed. 5/3 9:00 a.m., Bowling Trip. \$7.50 for 2 Games and Shoes.
 Wed. 5/10 1:00 p.m., Advisory Council Meetings. All Invited.
 Tue. 5/16 1:00 p.m., *Managing Insomnia*.
 Sat. 5/20 4:00-5:45 p.m., Ballroom Dancing. 6 Classes. \$5. (RR)
 Fri. 5/26 11:00 a.m., 1st Anniversary Party. Fashion Show.

Hollin Hall
1500 Shenandoah Road
Alexandria, VA 22308
Phone: 703-765-4573

Wed. 5/3 9:30 a.m., Ikebana International: Chiko Arrangements
 Interpreting Haiku.
 Fri. 5/12 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Admiral Tilp Boat Tour and
 Lunch in Old Town. \$1 Transportation + Lunch. (RR)
 Fri. 5/19 10:00 a.m., Sight and Sound Tech Quest Fair at Fairfax
 County Government Center. \$1 Bus. (RR)
 { Mon. 5/22 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., 2-Day AARP Driver Safety
 { Thur. 5/25 Program. \$10. Registration, Call 703-204-3366.
 Wed. 5/31 1:00 p.m., *Dealing With Emotions* by Margaret Kollay. (RR)

James Lee
James Lee Community Center
2855 Annandale Road
Falls Church, VA 22042
Phone: 703-534-3387

Mondays 9:15 a.m. and 10:15 a.m., Yoga I. (RR)
 Mondays 12:30 p.m., Hawaiian Dance Class. (RR)
 Mon.-Fri. 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Fitness Center.
 Mon-Fri 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Rummikub Club.
 Tuesdays 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Bridge.
 Wednesdays 12:30 p.m., Tai Chi; 1:30 p.m., Tai Chi II. (RR)
 Thursdays 10:30 a.m., Advanced Line Dancing. (RR)
 Fridays 12:30 p.m., Ballroom Dancing Class.
 Fridays 12:30 p.m., Tai-Chi; 1:30 p.m., Tai Chi II. (RR)

Lewinsville
1609 Great Falls Street
McLean, VA 22101
Phone: 703-442-9075

Wednesdays 1:00-3:00 p.m., Looking for Square Dancers. Have Fun
 and Meet Some Great People. Singles or Couples!
 Mon. 5/1 11:15 a.m., *Managing Insomnia*.
 Thur. 5/4 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Cinco de Mayo Party.
 Thur. 5/18 10:00-11:45 a.m., Glucose and Blood Pressure Checks.
 Mon. 5/22 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Memorial Day Picnic at River-
 bend Park
 Thur. 5/25 12:30 p.m., May Birthday Celebration.

Lincolnia
4710 North Chambliss St.
Alexandria, VA 22312
Phone: 703-914-0223

Fri. 5/2 1:00 p.m., Armchair Travel: Australia by Train. (RR)
 Tue. 5/9 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Blood Pressure Screening—Walk-in.
 Tue. 5/9 10:30 a.m., *Managing Insomnia*. (RR)
 Thur. 5/11 6:00 p.m., Ballgame! Potomac Nationals. (RR)
 Fri. 5/12 1:00 p.m., Mother's Day Tea. (RR)
 Fri. 5/18 10:00 a.m., Presentation on Reverse Mortgages. (RR)

HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

Little River Glen
4001 Barker Court
Fairfax, VA 22032
Phone: 703-503-8703

**Blood Pressure Checks, 10 a.m.,
 2nd & 4th Fridays.**

Tue. 5/9 1:00 p.m., Marantha Singers.
 Tue. 5/16 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m., Seminar: *Legal and Financial Planning for Long-Term Care.*
 Wed. 5/16 1:00 p.m., May Birthday Party.
 Wed. 5/17 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Bake Sale.
 Thur. 5/18 1:00 p.m., Managing *Insomnia.*
 Wed. 5/24 1:00 p.m., *Stress in Retirement* Discussion by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging.

Lorton
7722 Gunston Plaza
Lorton, VA 22079
Phone: 703-550-7195

Tue. 5/2 12:30 p.m., Film and Discussion About Hummingbirds With Joy From the Wild Bird Center.
 Wed. 5/3 6:00 p.m., Annual Community Coffee House Night! Entertainment by Lowe Runner Band. Bring the Family!
 Wed. 5/10 10:00 a.m., Trip: DC Ducks Land and Sea Tour of Washington, DC. Bring Bag Lunch. \$. (RR)
 Thur. 5/11 12:30 p.m., Free Computer Coaching by Appointment.
 Fri. 5/19 10:00 a.m., May Birthday Celebration With DJ Steve.
 Tue. 5/23 10:00 a.m., Spring Picnic at Leesylvania Park. BBQ, Nature Center, Games, & Fishing (bring rod/license). \$. (RR by 5/16)

Pimmit Hills
7510 Lisle Avenue
Falls Church, VA 22043
Phone: 703-734-3338

Fri. 5/5 10:30 a.m., Asian Food Shopping. \$1 Bus.
 Mon. 5/8 11:00 a.m., Jazzercise Class.
 Fri. 5/19 1:00 p.m., Line Dancing Class.
 Mon. 5/22 10:00 a.m., Ceramics Class. (RR)
 Mon. 5/22 10:30 a.m., Tai Chi.

Sully
5690 Sully Road
Centreville, VA 20124
Phone: 703-322-4475/4479

Tue. 5/2 12:30 p.m., Beaded Bracelet/Chandelier Earrings. (RR)
 Wed. 5/3 10:30 a.m., Jazzercise Lite With Jennifer.
 Tue. 5/9 10:30 a.m., Mother's Day Breakfast. (RR)
 Fri. 5/19 10:00 a.m., Sight and Sound Tech Quest Fair at Fairfax County Government Center.
 Tue. 5/30 10:00 a.m., Trip to Ballston Commons. (RR)

Wakefield
Audrey Moore RECenter
8100 Braddock Road
Annandale, VA 22003
Phone: 703-321-3000

Thursdays 12:30 p.m., Jazzercise With Peggy. \$5/8 Weeks. (RR)
 Thursdays 12:30 p.m., Beginner's Bridge.
 Wed. 5/10 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Basic Computer Class (also on 5/17, 5/24). (RR)
 Thur. 5/11 10:00 a.m., Trip to Red Lobster. \$1 Bus. (RR)
 Fri. 5/12 11:00 a.m., *Managing Insomnia.*
 Fri. 5/12 12:30-1:30 p.m., Basic Internet Class (also on 5/19, 5/26). (RR)
 Mon. 5/22 Trip to Washington, DC, Art Galleries. \$1 Bus. (RR)
 Wed. 5/31 10:30 a.m., Entertainment With DJ Steve.

Additional Locations for Meals/Other Activities

David R. Pinn Community Center
10225 Zion Drive
Fairfax, VA 22032
Phone: 703-250-9181

Huntington Community Center
5751 Liberty Drive
Alexandria, VA 22303
Phone: 703-960-1917



Apartment Conversion to Condo Craze... Buy? Or Bye-Bye!

*by Cal Wagner, Homeowner Association Liaison,
Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection*

In the March issue, Lewis Grayson, a long-term tenant, decided to give up his apartment home. He wasn't ready to become a condominium owner, so he said bye-bye.

Unlike Lewis, Marie and Mortimer liked the area and wanted to own their first home and take advantage of the developer's "early-bird" price incentive. Some of their friends also were also thinking about buying newly renovated "up-scale" condo units. So, Marie and Mortimer committed to buy their apartment unit.

The developer had attractively "glitized the place," with new built-in cabinets, floors and appliances, but she and Mortimer were disturbed at no reduction in the "living noises" coming through the floor and walls from adjacent units, as it had when they were tenants. Many of the new owners were pleased with their renovated units, but they all were concerned that one owner had found a large puddle of water indicating a plumbing leak in a wall. The leak was found to be a small split in the original plastic piping that was still throughout the building. The leak was in a section of pipe that served only one unit so the owner had the full financial burden for the repairs, as well as liability for any damages to any other units or to the common elements of the condominium.

According to the management, the original utility systems in the 23-year-old apartment building were built to code when constructed and are now "grandfathered," meaning that the developer is not required to upgrade or replace these original systems. In addition to the water supply piping, this included the heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning equipment; the sanitary drain, waste, and vent systems; the electrical system, and even the soundproofing. Many of these systems are "common elements" for which the unit owners' association is responsible, including financially, for repairs, restoration, renovation and/or replacement. Effectively, this means all unit owners are equally re-

sponsible for the whole building, as well as for their individual units.

Alerted to these issues, Marie and Mortimer turned to a stack of condominium association papers the developer had provided before the settlement. They had not read these documents, so they did not understand the association's authority or their obligations as members. They missed the fact that the state law allows a purchaser to cancel the sales contract within 3 days of receiving the association documents from the seller, and that by completing the settlement they had conclusively waived their right to cancel the purchase contract. They read that all of the unit owners are "mandatory" members of an owners' association; that they elect a board of directors to conduct the business and governance of the association, including the adoption and enforcement of rules and regulations; and that they could be "fined" by the association for violation of the covenants or rules and regulations. Now as owners, they must adhere to the association's governance, even though they were uninformed at the time they settled.

Until now, Marie and Mortimer had thought that the management was the association — the management had been there from the start and knew everything. Well, if the unit owners are the association, then who is running its meetings? What meetings? When and how did this association get up and running in the first place? Suddenly, they realized there was a lot more going on that they needed to learn, fast.

Marie and Mortimer learned that in addition to paying their mortgage and property taxes, each unit owner pays an annual assessment or "condominium fee" to support maintenance of the common elements. Additionally, the association is required to collect reserve funds for planned renovations and replacements, and unplanned emergencies regarding the "com-

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Condo Conversion Cont. From p. 10

mon elements.” They read that the common elements are everything comprising the condominium, except the privately owned units. They typically include storage, trash, and laundry rooms; balconies, roofs, outside walls, and windows; the utility rooms and systems throughout the buildings; the building lobby and halls, stairs and elevators; the roads and parking spaces; and all land and recreational facilities. The operation of the association includes trash service and water supply, snow plowing, landscaping, management, and all other contracts.

By not reading these documents before they purchased their condominium, Marie and Mortimer didn’t give themselves the opportunity to make an informed decision. Now they don’t have the option to say bye-bye to the requirements and restrictions of the governing documents that displease them.

Buying a condominium unit, particularly in an older structure or converted apartment building, is a major investment and it is imperative that you read the developer’s public offering statement. Read and understand all of the documents provided to you, ask questions, and get answers before making a decision to buy. You also might talk with other potential purchasers.

Here are some questions you should ask and thoroughly understand before making a commitment to buy a condo unit:

- Is the condominium complex professionally managed?
- How much is the monthly condominium fee? Are any special assessments or increases in the condominium fee planned in the next 12 months? If so, you need to know so you can determine the affordability of the unit if you purchase it. What services are included? You should compare these fees with other comparable complexes.
- What is the financial condition of the condominium unit owner’s association? Are there sufficient reserve funds for future renovation and replacement of the common elements?

- What coverage is provided by the master fire and liability insurance policy? Fire insurance should cover full replacement cost of the condominium units. Some condominiums require each unit owner to purchase property damage and liability insurance. Personal property, furnishings, and clothing are not covered by the master policy.

- Have you thoroughly read and understand the bylaws, covenants, and rules of the association? Are there restrictions such as no pets, recreation vehicles, or limitations on exterior decorations or interior renovations? Be cautious if you are not comfortable with these restrictions, or if they do not fit into your preferred lifestyle.

- Do the governing documents limit how many units may be rented by absentee owners? Are there other means of limiting the rental of the condominium units? A mortgage loan may be difficult to obtain when the percentage of rental units is more than 35%.

- Have you considered obtaining an independent home inspection to determine the condition of the appliances and infrastructure systems?

Do your homework and your home can be all that you dreamed it could be.

The *Golden Gazette* is available also in large print, recorded format, and online (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa). Call 703-324-5633.

Sight and Sound Tech Quest—May 19

The Fairfax County Public Library invites people with sight, hearing or other disabilities, and caregivers, to the Sight and Sound Tech Quest on May 19, 10:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. This free event takes place in the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax.

The Sight and Sound Tech Quest will feature presentations by industry experts, as well as assistive equipment demonstrations (more than 25 vendors will be participating) and light refreshments. One of the four presenters is Frank Kurt Cylke, the internationally-renowned director of the National Library Service for the Blind and the Physically Handicapped. Other presentations will be given by Eddie Timanus, a *USA Today* sports writer and former “Jeopardy” winner who is blind; Dr. Joey Wallace, director of the Virginia Assistive Technology Loan Financing Authority of the Virginia Assistive Technology System; and Dr. Suleiman Alibhai, a low-vision specialist who heads Inova Health System’s Hazel E.R. Widner Low Vision Center. The schedule of presentations is:

■ **Life With Vision Loss.** 10:30-11:00 a.m. Eddie Timanus will discuss how technology assists him in his successful career as a journalist as well as in his personal life.

■ **Assistive Technology: Creative Solutions for Independence.** 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Dr. Joey Wallace, who has written extensively on disability-related topics, will demonstrate assistive equipment. He also will discuss how the Virginia Technology System can provide financial assistance for Virginia residents with sight and hearing disabilities who need assistive technology.

■ **The Use of Assistive Technology in the Rehabilitation of Visually Impaired Individuals.** 1:00-1:30 p.m. Dr. Suleiman Alibhai will discuss how to lead a full and independent life after vision loss.

■ **The Digital World: Broken-Field Running With a Touchdown in Sight.** 2:00-2:30

p.m. Frank Kurt Cylke will discuss the digital future of books and reading, and the National Library Services’ development of digital Talking Books.

For details, call **703-324-8380** (TTY 703-324-8365).

Older Americans Month Champions *Choices for Independence*

May is Older Americans Month. America’s aging population reached a turning point in 2006. One of the nation’s largest generations, the baby boomers, started turning 60. As many as 78 million people constitute the baby boomer generation. According to the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA), the baby boomers are among the millions of mid-life and older adults who are continuing to redefine how we age.

This year’s theme, *Choices for Independence*, reflects the commitment of the Aging Network to prepare for a larger aging population, and to bolster the efforts of baby boomers and older adults to achieve healthy aging. Independence for adults as they age relies on a balance of important elements: living in their own homes and communities as long as possible; empowerment in consumer choices; healthy lifestyles that emphasize nutrition, physical activity, prevention, active participation in one’s health care; and access to the tools necessary to make informed decisions. These elements help older adults maintain the dignity they deserve, providing more opportunities to live longer independently while contributing to communities they cherish.

Fairfax County’s population is aging in place. The senior population is expected to expand more rapidly after 2010 because the oldest baby boomers will reach age 65 in 2011. By 2020, it is projected that there will be 138,600 persons age 65 and older living in Fairfax.

For assistance or information, contact the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging at **703-724-7948** (TTY 703-449-1186) or visit the Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/aaa.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

One of the best ways to spend your time is to volunteer. Everyone benefits from volunteering. The agencies receive the help they need, and the volunteers receive satisfaction from helping others.

The **AAA Meals on Wheels (MOW) program** needs volunteers to deliver meals in the following areas: Alexandria, Baileys Crossroads, Chantilly/Centreville, Fairfax, Falls Church, Herndon/Reston, Little River Glen, Mt. Vernon, Tyson's, and Vienna. Volunteers who speak Vietnamese are needed in Falls Church. The job involves picking up meals at specified sites between 10:30 a.m.–noon, and delivering the meals by 1:00 p.m. Drivers may choose to deliver meals on a daily, weekly, biweekly, monthly or substitute basis. A volunteer **treasurer** for Little River Glen in Annandale and a **group coordinator** for Forest Glen in Chantilly also are needed. For information, call the Volunteer Intake Line at **703-324-5406**, TTY 703-449-1186, or e-mail *melanie.mitchell@fairfaxcounty.gov*.

The **Fairfax Area Agency on Aging's Volunteer Home Services** program needs volunteers in the Annandale, Falls Church, McLean, Reston, and Route 1 areas. Volunteers assist with a variety of services to enable clients to maintain their independence while living in their own homes. Grocery shopping, light housekeeping, minor home maintenance, transportation for medical appointments and errands are some of the services provided. Volunteers are on call and help when available. Call the Volunteer Intake Line at **703-324-5406**.

The **Fairfax County Department of Family Services (DFS)** needs volunteers to mentor children between the ages of 5 and 12. A 1-year commitment is required. Ongoing support is provided. Contact Chuck Berlin at **703-324-7874**; *charles.berlin@fairfaxcounty.gov*. Volunteers also are needed to mentor parents who are DFS clients. A 6-month commitment is required. Contact Laurie Eytel at **703-324-**

7871; *leytel@fairfaxcounty.gov*. Training for both programs is Saturday, May 6, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. in Falls Church.

The **Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman program** needs volunteer help with data entry, correspondence, filing, event-planning and reference list maintenance. Knowledge of MS Word and Excel and strong English skills are necessary. The time commitment is flexible—weekdays, 5-8 hours per week in Fairfax. Call **703-324-5434**.

The **Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vien-na** provides services to older adults. Volunteers are needed to do minor home repairs, make friendly phone calls, provide transportation to medical appointments, do grocery shopping, and other errands. Call Kara Kelch at **703-281-0538**, or *office@scov.org*.

To have a volunteer opportunity considered for this column, please e-mail or fax your submission to **Retha Lockhart** by the first of the month one month in advance.

E-mail: *retha.lockhart@fairfaxcounty.gov*

Fax: **703-324-3583**

Phone: **703-324-5407**

Support Groups

No listing this month. However, please note the correction below:

Correction to Date and Meeting Place

✱ **Mended Hearts Support Group Chapter 200**. Meets on the 1st Saturday of the month, 11:00 a.m., at Inova Hospital, Heart & Vascular Institute, 3300 Gallows Rd., Falls Church. Contact John Braddon at **703-385-9694** or *jbraddon@cox.net*.

CAREGIVER'S CORNER

Long-Distance Caregiving Tips

If you live over an hour away and help in some way with your parent's care, you are a long-distance caregiver. Many long-distance caregivers provide emotional support and occasional respite to a primary caregiver who is in the home. Long-distance caregivers can play a part in arranging for professional caregivers, hiring home health aides, or locating assisted living and nursing home care. Some long-distance caregivers help a parent pay for care, while others step in to manage finances. Caregiving is not easy for anyone—not the caregiver nor the care receiver. The most important task is to try to plan ahead before a crisis occurs.

Here are some helpful suggestions:

- **Know what you need to know.** Learn as much as you can about your parent's medical care, finances, and daily routine. Make sure at least one member of the family has written permission to receive medical and financial information. Put together a notebook with vital information about health care, social services, contact numbers, financial issues, physicians, neighbors, etc
- **Plan your visits.** You can get more done and feel less stressed by talking to your parent ahead of time and finding out what he/she would like to do when you visit. Would your mother like to visit the mall or another family member? Could your father use help fixing things around the house? Would you like to accompany either one on a visit to the doctor? Decide on the priorities and leave other tasks to another visit.
- **Remember to actually spend time visiting with your family member.** Try to do things unrelated to being a caregiver. Rent a movie, take your parent to a worship service, look at old photos and reminisce. Perhaps a car ride and a meal out would provide a change of scenery to someone who may no longer be driving.
- **Get in touch and stay in touch.** Try to find people in your parent's community who can be your eyes and ears and provide a realistic view

of what is going on. This may include the spouse, a physician, a neighbor, or a friend.

- **Help your parent stay in contact.** Program telephone numbers into your parent's phone so he/she can speed-dial contacts. Get an emergency alert system in case of a fall, or an identification bracelet to wear on outings.
- **Find out about resources in your parent's neighborhood.** Having a copy of the local phone book may be helpful. The "Blue Pages" provide listings of state and local government services. The local Area Agency on Aging can provide information about individual services and care managers who may be able to assist with coordinating services. If you don't have a local phone book, call the Eldercare Locator (**1-800-677-1116**) to reach the local Area Agency on Aging.

The Internet can be a valuable tool for researching local services. The local government may have a Web site providing information. To find out about services for seniors in Virginia, contact www.seniornavigator.org.

For area resources, call the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, at **703-324-7948**.

Source: Portions for this article were excerpted from the National Institute on Aging (NIA) publication, "So Far Away—Twenty Questions for Long-Distance Caregivers." For a copy of this publication, visit the Web site at <http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation> or call toll-free 1-800-222-2225.



Happy
Mother's Day
May 14

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

May 6. 6:30 p.m. (Gala Silent Auction); 8:00 p.m. (Concert). Choralis Presents "Festival of Psalms," Bernstein's Chichester Psalms, and Works by Bach, Brahms, and Haydn. Falls Church Presbyterian Church, 225 E. Broad St. (Rt. 7), Falls Church. \$30 (premium), \$25 (regular), and \$20 (student/senior). Call **703-237-2499** or visit www.choralis.org.

May 6. 8:00 p.m. The Robin Hood Project. Hesperus accompanies Douglas Fairbanks' 1922 silent film, *Robin Hood*, with a live, newly created score of medieval and Renaissance music. Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Call **703-790-9223** or www.mcleancenter.org

May 7. 7:00 - 10:00 a.m. Spring Bird Walk. Hike with a naturalist in search of migrating warblers, raptors and other birds. Learn why Riverbend Park attracts so many species and why it is an important stopover and nesting area. Bring binoculars. Reservations required. Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Call **703-759-9018**.

May 11-June 1. 9:00-10:30 a.m. Create Your Own Cookbook With Personal Precious Memories. Dianne King, former editor-in-chief of Pillsbury Cookbooks, shows how to create a family cookbook with your own recipes and photos. Four sessions: \$30 resident; \$37.50 nonresident. Advanced

registration required. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE, Vienna. **703-255-6360**.

May 20. 7:00 p.m. Mystery Night: Murder in the Keys. Meet colorful characters, gather clues and figure out "whodunit." Kingstowne Public Library, 6500 Landsdowne Center, Alexandria. To register, call **703-339-4610**.

May 25. 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Spanish Festival. Celebrate Older Americans Month with live music from the Latin Soul band and dancing with Salsa Fuega. Enjoy a buffet of Latin treats. Exhibitors specializing in aging issues will be on hand. Reston Hospital will provide health screenings. Reston Community Center, Hunters Woods, 2310 Colt's Neck Rd., Reston. Registration required. Call **703-390-6157**.

May 28. 2:00-3:00 p.m. Dog Day Afternoon. Treat your canine companion to a special cruise aboard Lake Accotink Park's pontoon boat. Adults \$5. No children under 8 years. To register, send participant's name, address, phone number, program title, and check payable to FCPA to Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Rd., Springfield, VA 22150. Call **703-569-0285** for credit card registrations or more information.

Lunch N' Life Programs

Wednesday, May 24. 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. **Annandale-Springfield Shepherd's Center Lunch N' Life** will feature Vivian Watts, Delegate, Virginia General Assembly, and Kay Wallick, Executive Director of the Shepherd's Center of America. Sleepy Hollow United Methodist Church, 3409 Sleepy Hollow Rd., Falls Church. \$5/lunch. Seating is limited. Registration deadline is May 18. Call **703-941-1419**.

Thursday, May 25. 12:00-2:00 p.m. **Fairfax-Burke Shepherd's Centers Lunch N' Life** will feature Juliet Eilperin, author and Washington Post staff writer, who will speak about her experiences on Capitol Hill. St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church, 11911 Braddock Rd., Fairfax. \$5/Lunch. Registration deadline is May 15 or when seating capacity is reached. Call Lucy Schleibaum to register at **703-323-0345**.

Monday, June 12. 12:00 p.m. **Oakton-Vienna Shepherd's Center Lunch N' Life Program.** Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 2589 Chain Bridge Rd., Vienna. \$8/lunch. To register, call **703-281-0538**.

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH 2006



CHOICES FOR INDEPENDENCE